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NOTES

Area P-3

CIA/RR-GR-108

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## NOTES

## Area P-3

1. Introduction

Area P-3, located in the westernmost sector of the Beskid Mountains and the adjacent piedmont zone, includes a few mountain localities that are suitable for [REDACTED] The forest cover of the relatively low mountains offers good concealment, particularly in the summer months when the combined deciduous-coniferous canopy is densest. Population is sparse and is concentrated in small agricultural villages located along the valleys and on cleared lower slopes of the mountains. Furthermore, the Beskids are near the piedmont zone, where the strategic transportation, communications, and power lines that serve industrial Upper Silesia provide good targets for possible UW operations. The mountains, however, are becoming a popular resort area, and tourist facilities (roads, communications, and shelters) are gradually spreading into higher and more isolated sections. Area P-3 is therefore recommended.

2. Terrain (Overlay 1)

The northern part of Area P-3 lies within the piedmont zone, which rises from the Vistula River plain in the north, at first gradually and then more abruptly, to the mountains in the south. Among the prominent relief features of the piedmont are gently rounded hills and ridges that reach an elevation of 900 feet and numerous rivers that cross the area in a north-south direction.

Foot travel across this hill land is relatively easy. The relief offers few obstacles to movement, and the rivers are fordable except after heavy rains in the mountains to the south and during the spring thaw period, when melting snow swells the rivers and causes widespread flooding. In many of the piedmont valleys, fish ponds have been built and these form effective barriers to movement across the area.

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The Beskid Mountains rise to elevations of over 5,000 feet. The upper courses of the Vistula, Biała, and Skawa Rivers and their tributaries divide the mountains into three distinct sections: Beskid Śląski in the west, Beskid Mały in the east, and Beskid Żywiecki in the southeast. Within all these sections the relief consists mostly of rounded massifs separated by depressions and valleys troughs. Differences in elevation between the depressions and the mountain tops are comparatively large, the depressions having an elevation of from 1,000 to 2,000 feet and the mountain tops ranging in elevation from 3,000 to 5,000 feet.

25X1C

Cross-country movement through the mountains favors [REDACTED] travel, but it is slow and at times hazardous. Large stretches of the mountains are heavily forested and provide good [REDACTED] 25X1C throughout the year. Underbrush is comparatively light and does not seriously obstruct foot travel. Some of the forested slopes, however, are steep and their ascent or descent would be slow and difficult. Furthermore, scattered clearings on steep slopes increase the potential hazard of landslides and avalanches. The large number of rivers that have their source in the Beskid Mountains become torrents after heavy rains and during the spring thaw and would be serious obstacles to movement. At other times, they are fordable in all stretches where the slope of the valleys is moderate.

### 3. Population Distribution (Overlay 2)

The piedmont zone of Area P-3 is densely populated. A large part of the population lives in agricultural villages, many of which consist of 40 or more cottages strung along both sides of a main street. Some of the larger towns stretch for a mile or more along one street and serve as local market centers for the surrounding hamlets; others have developed at intersections of main roads and have become administrative, commercial, and transportation centers for larger area. Bielsko Biala (population 65,000), Czechowice (formerly Dziedzice; population 20,400), and Cieszyn (population 20,300) are the largest urban centers in the zone. All are important cities on the strategic railroads that cross the piedmont and connect the industrial core of Upper Silesia with the industrial area of Ostrava in Czechoslovakia.

In the Beskid Mountains to the south, population is sparse and is concentrated in the many valleys and depressions. Clearings are more extensive and population is more dense in the wider valleys of the central and northeast section than in the narrower and the steeper valleys in the western and southern sections. Rural hamlets and villages predominate. Small towns, which generally have a population of less than 5,000, have developed in the larger valleys and serve as market centers. Zywiec, located at the intersections of most major transportation routes in the central section of the mountains, is a busy commercial, industrial, and transportation center.

#### 4. Land Use (Overlay 3)

The open, cleared lands of the piedmont zone are extensively cultivated and would provide [REDACTED] 25X1C

25X1C [REDACTED]. Independent agricultural landholdings predominate. Oats, rye, and potatoes are the chief crops, and large areas are in pasture. Livestock production is high and is particularly important as a source of cash income to small farmers. Oats, grown exclusively as feed for livestock, are seeded in mid-April and harvested in the latter part of July. Rye, the most important grain crop, is sown in the fall and is harvested in July; potatoes, the staple food and feed crop, are sown in May and harvested in September. In addition to these main crops, vegetables and fruits are raised on all individual farmsteads for local consumption.

In contrast to the piedmont zone, the Beskid Mountains contain large forested sections that offer good [REDACTED] 25X1C

25X1C [REDACTED] Fir, pine, and spruce predominate on the upper and steeper slopes. The forests of the lower slopes, on the other hand, include oak and beech mixed with pine. Forest cover is not continuous but is interrupted by cleared, cultivated areas. The many valleys and the lower slopes of the mountains have been cleared and planted in crops or left in pasture. Most of the farms are individually owned. The crops grown and the dates of sowing and harvesting are similar to those in the piedmont zone. Cleared slopes not suitable for crop cultivation are left in pasture.

## 5. Transportation and Telecommunications (Overlay 4)

### a. Railroads

Two west-east rail lines, the Zebrzydowice-Czechowice (Dziedzice)-Oświęcim and the Cieszyn-Bielsko Bia/a-Wadowice routes, serve Area P-3 and connect with the important north-south Stalinogród (Katowice) -- Czechowice-Bielsko Bia/a line, thus providing two important rail links between the industrial Ostrava area in Czechoslovakia and the industrial complex of Upper Silesia. The Zebrzydowice-Czechowice-Oświęcim line, which connects with the Stalinogród-Bielsko Bia/a line at Czechowice, skirts the northern margin of Area P-3. It is double tracked and is the more direct of the lines between the two industrial areas. The Cieszyn-Bielsko Bia/a-Wadowice railroad is a single-track line that provides an alternate route from Upper Silesia to Czechoslovakia.

Three rail lines serve the Beskid Mountains. In the west, the Golezów-Głęboce line branches southward into the mountains from the Cieszyn-Wadowice line. In the central section, the Bielsko Bia/a-Żywiec-Zwardon route is a southward continuation of the Stalinogród-Bielsko Bia/a route and extends to the Czechoslovak border at Zwardon. At present, no trains cross the international border at Zwardon, but the route could be used to connect Upper Silesia with Ostrava, Czechoslovakia. One east-west line, the Żywiec-Sucha route, crosses the southeastern part of the Beskids and connects with the Stalinogród-Zwardon route; it is the only major east-west transportation route through the mountains. The line is used primarily for local traffic and carries a large number of tourists to the many resort areas.

### b. Roads

Area P-3 is crossed by a fairly dense road network that adequately serves the local needs of the population. Several main roads and a large number of secondary roads have been built in the mountains and have reduced to a significant degree the isolation that formerly characterized the region. Main mountain roads generally follow major streams and connect the numerous small towns within the valleys.

Secondary roads branch off these main roads and lead to smaller agricultural settlements located along the lower slopes of the mountains. Traffic on the secondary roads is generally light, with horse-drawn carts the most common means of transportation. In addition to the main and secondary roads, a large number of paths and trails cross more rugged terrain and lead to tourist hotels, hostels, and foresters' huts that abound throughout the mountains.

c. Telecommunications

On the overlay, telecommunications lines are shown only for Area P-3. They are the prewar lines, and the network today is undoubtedly more extensive. Telecommunications facilities are probably now available in many more of the smaller villages and hamlets.

6. Fuel and Power (Overlay 5)

The major power lines of Area P-3 that serve the principal towns and their industries are shown schematically on Overlay 5. Precise information is not available on postwar extensions of these lines, and the rural villages that have been electrified recently have not been identified.

7. Security and Related Features (Overlay 6) 25X1C

The following activities adversely affect [REDACTED] in Area P-3:

(1) heavy tourist traffic along the large number of trails and paths that lead to mountain resorts scattered throughout the area; (2) the presence of frontier guard (WOP) and citizens' militia (MO) personnel particularly within the frontier zone from Cieszyn to Zwardon to Pilsko, where these organizations are charged specifically with the responsibility of controlling movement of all people; and (3) frequent patrolling of the woodlands by foresters and the use of foresters' huts as fire observation posts. The huts are generally located at sites that afford a wide-range panoramic view of surrounding country.

8. Climate

a. Summer

Summer weather in Area P-3 is well suited to outdoor camping activities. Days are very long, averaging 16 hours; temperatures are

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mild, with the average afternoon temperatures rising to the mid-70's and the mean minimum temperatures in the low 50's. Precipitation is heavy in summer, and the frequent thunderstorms may result in floods that would temporarily halt outdoor activities. Visibility is generally excellent, although dense fogs may occur on the mountain tops.

b. Autumn

Weather conditions in autumn are very variable, and periods of modified summer weather alternate with spells of mild winter weather. Temperatures decrease rapidly from September to November. By November, midday temperatures have dropped to the low 40's and mean daily minimum temperatures are below freezing. The amount of precipitation decreases markedly, particularly in the mountains, but the number of days with precipitation increases. Thunderstorms of short duration are replaced by grey, misty, dull days. Snowfall is likely to occur as early as October and almost certainly by November. Visibility is poorer as the season advances and early morning fogs are common. Often, fog settles in the valleys and depressions while the higher slopes of the mountains have clear skies.

c. Winter

Winters in the Beskid Mountains and the piedmont zone are long, cold, and gloomy. Days are short, averaging about 8 hours in length. Temperatures are low, and in the mountains the afternoon temperature may not rise much above freezing. Cold spells, when temperatures drop to 0°F or lower, are likely to occur in any of the three winter months. Precipitation is generally in the form of snow, which accumulates to a depth of a foot or more in the mountains. Consequently, skis or snow shoes are necessary equipment for cross-country movement. Poor visibility prevails throughout the winter. Morning fogs are common, particularly in the valleys and depression. Winter climatic conditions are severe and almost prohibitive to outdoor camping activities. For a prolonged stay in the area, substantial shelters would be needed.

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d. Spring

Spring, like autumn, is a transition period with extremely variable weather. Temperatures increase from March to May; after mid-April, below-freezing temperatures are not likely to occur and camping conditions improve. Precipitation, which is heavier than in winter, and higher temperatures that result in thaws combine to cause extensive and destructive floods in the river valleys. Early morning fog, and poor visibility persist throughout much of the spring.

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